



Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

SUMMARY

Looking back

It was wonderfully, moving and inspiring to see the Critical Friends core group on the screen on the 14th January. The session itself was energising and the individual reactions of participants afterwards were unanimously positive and encouraging. It confirmed our belief in the power of kindred minds.

We are planning for the Critical Friends first physical annual meeting on 10th September in Amsterdam. As it is meant to be a joint initiative, co-created by all involved, we were really encouraged by the pre-meeting during which ideas were flagged and critical issues raised. We feel that from there it can grow with the continued involvement of everyone. Each of us should engage according to our own possibilities, needs and wishes.

The following reflections derive from the first conversations and are intended to frame the next steps towards September:

Who are we?

We are all friends that have worked with each other previously. We are a rich mix of highly experienced leaders, educators and creators and represent very specific personal and professional cultural contexts of artistic and/or educational practice. We share the belief that this diversity of cultural contexts enhances the value of the international perspective of the arts. We came together organically, and we hope to continue to grow in the same organic way, with a clear focus on greater diversity, so as to be more representative of the societies we live in.

What is our goal?

With Critical Friends the Art Futures Foundation brings together people, not institutions, from the arts (all creative, performing and design disciplines) and arts education. In times of precariousness, populism and fragmentation we want to create a space of care for one another and for society, a safe space to exchange concerns, ideas and work. We want to strengthen and empower each other with respectful, inspiring and radical conversations that open up new horizons of thought and perspectives of development. With courage and precision we can play a modest but important role in sharpening the self-image of the arts, the artists, and the impact the arts has on society. With whatever themes we identify as urgent, our projected - image as a sector and how we represent ourselves will be the point of departure for future impact.

How do we want to achieve this?

We want to meet and talk. We also want to involve 'outside' voices that prevent us from being self-affirmative. We do not only want to talk the talk, we also want to walk the walk, not only talk about the arts but through the arts. So how do we include artists in a conversation that otherwise threatens to be policy-heavy? First ideas were expressed in the groups and opportunities are created by the breadth of professional practice of the Critical Friends themselves and the networks they represent as well as a residency that Art Futures develops at the moment.



Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

What are our topics?

We started by discussing three topics (one theme per group). These topics were identified by the Art Futures team from the proposals sent in by the Critical Friends. The following are the condensed conclusions of the three groups. Please find the full reports in the attachments:

Group 1, Towards a new canon: THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ARTS (GLOBAL)

To achieve equality, mutual respect and solidarity we must overcome Eurocentric, paternalistic, canon-driven values and practice, in short a conservative way of thinking.

How are we going to open up to artists and art developments across the North-South axis, from the former colonisers to the formerly colonised and vice-versa? Inclusiveness means a sincere openness to the 'other' and to one's own vulnerability as a transforming force. Political correctness must not limit out of the box thinking.

Group 2, Towards a new language: THE LANGUAGE OF THE ARTS (UNIQUE)

The language of the arts is often non-verbal or rational and can be difficult to communicate in the language we use every day. This hinders the recognition of the value of art, which tells about the world in its own unique, disturbing, irrational, fragile and beautiful way. The fact that the arts are a reservoir of knowledge on a par with other knowledge domains is not a shared understanding. Have we not done enough to bring this about? Of course we have, but we also agree that we must stop defending ourselves.

Group 3, Towards empowerment: THE RECOGNITION OF THE ARTS (POLITICAL)

Let us have a provocative contribution in September from an artist, an activist or an activist. Not from someone who is an art professional like most of us, sometimes with an art practice, but an artist who challenges our view. But also someone who is then able and willing to listen to our reactions, to that provocative input, become one of 'us' and, who knows, perhaps incorporate it into their next project, in a residency or otherwise. Maybe an artist establishing their direction and career that could be supported and mentored by the wealth of experience and knowledge to be found in our Critical Friends.

In summary, we could say, bluntly, that all three discussions are about an image crisis. The perceived-image of the arts as a sector (from north to global) and how to express that image (language and recognition) in order to unfold our full potential. A crisis is a chance and we all clearly want to jump at it and explore possibilities.

This is our first stocktaking. We encourage all Critical Friends to read the detailed reports of the three sessions. Please let us know if there are issues that are not covered, and you feel need including.

Annexes

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|--|------|---------|
| 1. Report group 'Towards a new canon?' | page | 4 - 6 |
| 2. Report group Towards a new language | page | 7 - 10 |
| 3. Report group Towards empowerment | page | 11 - 13 |
| 4. Bios participants | page | 14 - 21 |

Warm wishes,
Ben, Carla, John, Lars

4 March 2021

ANNEXES



Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

Annex 1

Discussion group 'Towards a new canon?'

Theme was introduced by	Milena Dragičević Šešić
Participants:	Barbara van Lindt Mike van Graan Chrissie Tiller Stefan Gies Kieran Corcoran Jacqueline Grandjean Emanuele Amodei
Rapporteur:	Michaela Butter
Chair:	Carla Delfos

Introduction

Milena Dragičević Šešić, prof. emerita University of Arts Belgrade introduced the theme, she briefly analyzed the current situation:

- Global Context(s): Liberalism /neoliberalism / illiberalism / populism – dominant interpretations of the present
- Injustice, inequality, poverty, wars, terrorism: forced migrations – low hospitality
- Dominant interpretations of the past are rigid and one-sided – right to a collective memory as one of the key human rights are denied to minority groups (and even to “majority” – women memory is lacking).

Milena's statement represented:

- View from a semi-periphery – periphery that decided to culturally colonize itself since XIX century
- But also, a view from a semi-periphery that decided to fight for multitude of voices (non-aligned countries, etc.): Thus, the question is: where is today *Many Voices One World* (the MacBride report) of UNESCO GC Belgrade, 1980.
- And individual statements and values: as academic and cultural operator in the FIRST PERSON FEMININE.

She proposed for discussion different approaches in the cultural field – to engage civic imagination, transnational views (in times of raised identity battles) and transdisciplinary enrichments.

Key questions addressed:

1. Toward a new Canon? Or toward multitudes of frameworks and horizons?
2. How to Decolonize our thoughts and concepts, dominant values!
3. How to create a new “canon” of “critical friendship” – empathy, solidarity, care...

Report

“Let's embrace a Horizon of Multitudes and let go of the concept of a canon?”

The concept of creating a new canon stimulated debate in the group and appeared to make people feel uncomfortable. Concerns raised that the term canon is too restrictive and conservative a concept, too tied to traditional paternalistic and nationalistic patterns of policy making. On the other hand we need to try to remain focussed and harness the expertise in the network if we are to bring about change.



Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

What appeared to be accepted by all was the concept of *a canon of critical friendship* that built on values of solidarity, care, & empathy but was mindful of challenging traditional methodologies – to shift from paternalistic approaches of largesse, (giving something to others less fortunate) and to create new paradigms of co-curation/co-production and genuine partnerships of equals, recognising different skills and experiences, building on mutual respect and social equity.

There was a call to move away from concepts of cultural diversity being treated as short term trends, a “curiosity” that is temporary accepted and celebrated before the West move onto the next fashion.

Interesting and significant difference between those countries/communities that have “self-colonised” to adapt western values, forgetting their past and those countries that have either been “colonisers” or “colonised”. The debates and priorities differ between each of these three groups with more emphasis within English speaking countries around enabling voices of those oppressed/colonised having their original cultural heritage celebrated (eg Africa and Asia) and supported, and those “self-colonised” rediscovering their original culture without falling prey of nationalist politics and pogroms.

As a group of senior influencers to what extent should we be challenging what are currently the “cultural norms” eg universities shifting to models of academic capitalism, behaving as corporations extending the concept of franchises across the world – what would be our role in taking forward cultural battles or do we simply facilitate and enable artists to do this on our behalf? Or, why we do not question major arts events like the Venice Biennale excluding cultures, accepting only rights of nation-states to exhibit there.

As a group should we be opening up membership to scientists and others to enrich and inform discussion on particular topics such as Climate Change, Population movements or COVID? Is our role to highlight how the arts can add value to discussions and planning related to these important challenges?

Cultural Wars – artists are well placed to raise awareness on political issues, challenge issues around representation, how history and memories are shaped to avoid different knowledge of the world to be heard, imposing horizons only seen through the filter of the winners/ruling elites...

An important concept to emerge was that it felt ***“the world feels as if it is in a Pre-phase, a moment of change and do we have an opportunity to create a new future by helping to shape a new narrative”*** post COVID in which digital and physical art will run alongside each other in new blended ways. Through developing Digital networking previous barriers to inclusion for excluded groups – visas, travel costs, physical challenges etc can be overcome, at least partially. The group needs to find ways to embrace these changes and facilitate new voices to join the group from outside Western networks –



Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

Key topics to emerge

What is the future role of the arts in a changing world – post Covid, Climate Change, creating new kinds of Cities that can respond and facilitate shifts of people (war, climate change etc)?

How can we support artists to undertake cultural wars/battles to promote a culture of kindness, a culture of memory and challenge politics of oblivion?

De colonising the cultural agenda – can we create a better understanding of what this means within a global context and what would be our role as a group to support change?

Old Voices New Voices – how can we facilitate the exchange of creative ideas and increase profile and knowledge of artists working outside accepted cultural networks/cliques particularly from Middle East, Africa and beyond.

How can we find delivery methodologies that celebrate ECO rather than EGO – challenging traditional meritocracies and open up new distribution networks? *Can we focus on how rather than what but ensuring more inclusive voices – let us focus on what are the questions we should be asking not start with focussing on the answers.*

Can we overcome guilt and emotions to define new values through listening to new voices?

How do we champion digital technology and AI in ensuring our discussions and debates can connect outside traditional cultural elite circles and networks and reach those most disenfranchised?

Role of the artist and artist in the crossing (overcoming) of imposed borders (eg Bulgarian cultural dominance over Macedonia)...

Michaela Butter
14/01/2021

Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

Annex 2

Towards a new language

Theme will be introduced by: Efva Lilja
Participants: Gottfried Wagner
Henry Rogers
John Butler
Paula Crabtree
Christine Pybus
Irina Cios
Rapporteur: Constant Meijers
Chair: Ben Hurkmans

Session is opened by Ben. After each participant introduced him or herself, Efva presented her introduction.

TOWARDS A NEW LANGUAGE

Towards a renewed language: Artists are facilitators of change who seek strategies to influence society through art, arouse individuals to be active and capable of taking a stand, of making a difference. Art nourishes imagined futurities. Therefore, we need to upgrade our strategies and activities in relation to today's societal and political changes. We need to focus on the inclusive activities that will leave indelible marks on the cultural ecosystem by delivering beyond current norms.

The concept of language is manifested in words. Beyond what is said there is nothing. Or is there? Words are used to manifest power. As for myself, I trust the unspoken, yet talking. I mistrust words, still writing. I live in a society where words are the given, where words legitimize our actions and I simply have to use them. I claim the right to their interpretation to reveal the hidden stories, images and words that otherwise risk drowning in nationalist, populist and reactionary political ideologies. What's at stake is art as a distortion of reality. We need a renewed language.

obstacles In the wake of populist challenges to a unified and inclusive Europe, we can identify the rise of fear and discomfort in societies and a change in the understanding of common welfare as a key for access and inclusion. Access to art and our sense of cultural belonging are highly influenced by these factors, as is freedom of speech. To whom are we listening? With whom are we talking? What language are we using? When subsidies are retracted, what do we do?

common values Culture is our common foundation and our societal contract. The arts spring from their cultural foundations to describe and express the incomprehensible, inviting us to dialogue. Art relies on a broad definition of the concepts of language, identity and culture, and it pushes us towards a widening of cultural norms and the formal set of rules employed in our society. Language as a part of various cultures, language develops when people live together. We must be able to talk about culture as our common foundation and about art as a notion in our culture, just as we must master a variety of narratives if we want to pay each other respect. With this in mind, we need to

Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

strengthen the artistic community in the direction cross-disciplinary capacity building in relation to communication.

This can only be done by the integration of citizens, a search for common values, a widened dialogue and knowledge transfer.

As artists we are forced to be more creative than ever to make a living. We are by desire and necessity developing new formats for working, sharing and presenting, creating working opportunities thinking outside the box. New models for organization, production and presentation create new markets. This in turn is linked to the type of trail-blazing activism that pioneers a disruptive approach, using the creative power of art to explore paths towards norm critical innovation, a practice of change. Why are we failing to communicate this as something crucial for society and cultural development?

artistic research The development of artistic research in recent years, places artistic research as an academic area separate from artistic activities in society. There is a clear tendency of adaptation of the arts to academic traditions developed by other fields of knowledge. This is worrying since professional artists really need a fruitful dialogue with universities in order to secure a development relevant for our time, not just working opportunities to feed ourselves. This, together with a political development that counteracts innovative arts, poses a threat to the arts and its potential power. Qualitative artistic educations need artistically qualified professors with research competence on an artistic basis. In order to attract those with relevant qualifications, artistic competence must be recognized on the same terms as humanistic or scientific competence. For this, artistic research should be one way of getting further. In many countries it is not.

conclusion We are the bearers of an enormous body of knowledge, which needs to be communicated, reflected on and analyzed critically. Our skills and knowledge may be rejected or adopted or dressed up in a different form. Art constitutes a field in which our need for both emotional and intellectual stimulus can be given a free rein, a way of re-thinking the present. I say, people need the arts more than ever and it is our responsibility to improve and develop new formats for its representation as well as a language for communication.

QUESTIONS

- When we want to improve professional skills, when we need new networking opportunities, partnerships and contacts – what do we do?
- How do we develop innovative models for capacity building, cross-disciplinary exchange and a co-creational approach for artistic production and presentation?
- How can we act for the recognition of art as a field of knowledge equated with areas of humanities and science?
- How can we ensure that artistic research contributes to the development of art and its representation in society?

Some examples for inspiration

Centriphery¹, a project involving partners in nine European countries, a project that incorporates a wide range of inter-connected activities to reach the goals of audience development while incorporating transnational mobility and capacity building. This is done by the establishment of curiosity zones, which include artistic and educational workshops, info-sessions and skills enhancing workshops for local artists and citizens. The development of the project explicitly addresses governmental, societal, ecological and economic issues.

The Screening Protest² project brings together political science and media studies perspectives to explore problems through comparing mediations of political dissent across time, space and narrative

Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

genre. When the Non-Existence Centre³ in Sweden acts socially, politically and artistically trying to answer the question: What is the potential of working with an expanded view of art in ongoing social and political processes? When dancer and choreographer Rita Macalo⁴ who immigrated to Britain from Portugal twenty years ago, spends time in The Jungle (refugee camp in Calais) to catch the voices of the refugees. When Anne Theresa de Keersmæker invites to A SLOW WALK⁵ through the streets of Brussels. When Beka Economopoulos works with Not An Alternative⁶, an arts collective and non-profit organization in Brooklyn with a mission to affect popular understanding of events, symbols, and history. When Leónidas Martín Saura⁷, artist and professor at Barcelona University develops collective projects in art and activism. When Elena Agathokleous at the Mitos Center in Cyprus takes part in Songs of My Neighbours⁸, a project staged in Poland.¹

<http://www.centriphery.eu>

² <http://screeningprotest.com>

³ <http://www.stallbergsgruva.se/english/>

⁴ <http://www.freedomfestival.co.uk/event/instant-dissidence-presents-dancing-strangers-calais-england/> ⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUWZ1_zmrig

⁶ <http://notanalternative.org>

⁷ <http://leodecerca.net/tag/leonidas-martin-saura/>

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrwUy6xuYU8>

italy and cyprus When Galerie⁹ turns into an immaterial art gallery dealing exclusively with immaterial artworks to support and promote immaterial object-hood. When top artists provide one-to-one support for creative artists who have fled their homelands in FLAX – Foreign Local Artistic Xchange¹⁰. When Norwegian artist Tormod Carlsen places his project/object O – The Healing Lump¹¹ in various places. When artist Sara Mara Samsara creates the site of Nicosia history of inter-communal strife, violence and war in Nicosia Metro Map¹². When performance artist Erdem Gunduz¹³ (Standing Man) stands silently for eight hours, facing a portrait of Kemal Ataturk. When RISK¹⁴, an artist collective based in Copenhagen, spend the last seven years developing their collective thinking. When Amanda Steggel's Motherboard project¹⁵ is working with how networking technologies have influenced the way people work, socialize, create and share information. When Koen Vanmechelen¹⁶, a Belgian artist investigates bio-cultural diversity through the Cosmopolitan Chicken Project and creates The open University of Diversity. When Shinobu Akimoto and Matthew Evans in Canada create a virtual institution: Residency For Artists on Hiatus¹⁷ for artists not making art – it makes a difference!

The list could go on forever.

⁹ <http://www.galerie.international/about/>

¹⁰ <https://www.berlin-artist.info/flax-foreign-local-artistic-xchange/>

¹¹ <https://www.tormodcarlsen.com/o>

¹² https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1JNtrUKvnmjM8cLX0Dh05YUrXXlw&hl=en_US&ll=35.12713167769399%2C33.356426999999994&z=12

¹³ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jun/18/turkey-standing-man>

¹⁴ <http://risk.nu>

¹⁵ <http://www.liveart.org/motherboard/>

¹⁶ <https://www.koenvanmechelen.be>

¹⁷ <https://residencyforartistsonhiatus.org>

Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

Efva's introduction led to a lively exchange of comments and remarks.

Henry Rogers emphasized the importance of artistic research.

Paula Crabtree referred to the language of power. According to her observation versions of this language are happening everywhere and may lead to the marginalization of the arts by politicians.

Constant Meijers showed concern with regard to this marginalization by explaining how politicians in The Netherlands avoid the term Art in favor of Culture. The latter is more encompassing and fluid than the first, thus easier for politicians to conceal behind.

Irina Cios asked whether we are going back to the pre-Covid situation or is the digital environment taking over. She observes new collaborations such as between classical and pop music. Irina asked if these collaborations will lead to an enlargement of audience numbers for both genres or will the genres both lose audiences.

Christine Pybus asked attention for the importance of language and learning though the non-verbal, 'this is undersold everywhere'.

Gottfried Wagner pointed to the situation between young and old. 'The divisions have become more sensitive because of the pandemic.' According to Gottfried it is important to connect generations through understanding the pandemic and to prepare for the time thereafter.

According to Ben Hurkmans the intrinsic quality of the arts may have become too academic. He refers to a recent development in The Netherlands where the Dutch Academy for the Sciences set up a second chapter representing the arts in The Netherlands by artists from all areas.

Efva argues that new cultural strategies are essential in renewing language, not giving in to populism.

Christine agrees: 'We represent the mavericks and the mystics.'

Efva brings in that young artists in Europe tend to be conservative; there's a need to find new ways of communicating.

Again Irina stresses the importance of developing artistic production itself and be cautious with the relation between art and politics.

In a follow-up of her remark not to overlook the importance of non-verbal language, Christina again underlines the importance of discriminating between language and vocabulary.

Efva points out that art is being defined within the concepts of culture. And the importance of focusing our abilities to the political spectrum.

From here the session reverted back to the plenary meeting.

Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

Annex 3

Towards empowerment

Theme will be introduced by: Cecilie Broch-Knudson

Participants: Alex Meszmer
Diana Blok
Mary Ann DeVlieg
Mercedes Giovinazzo
Nikolaus Wyss
Ulf Dalnäs
John O'Connor

Rapporteur: Patrizia Violi

Chair: Lars Ebert

The opening statement of Cecilie reflected on the Art Futures interest in ‘the role of art and education in future societies in an international arena’ as ‘our’ common and shared understanding of the importance of art and culture. The global pandemic has shown us that governments are not giving priority to the arts and the value of independent artists and their contribution to the freedom of expression, the welfare of society and the way they may contribute to change people’s perceptions. While compensation for lost income is being poured into private business enterprises, artists are being left to manage alone.

Cecilie stressed: “I truly believe that the arts can contribute to the creation of a more inclusive vision of cultures and values, both European and global. However, the educational opportunities, and perhaps especially within the arts, is still to a large degree determined by the socio-economic background of parents rather than by young people’s own abilities or talent. Education and training are key to the prevention and reversing of inequalities and opening up for a wider understanding and tolerance across countries, gender and race. Making an argument for the value of art and culture would have to embrace the importance of ensuring equal opportunities for all in pursuing an education and a career within the arts, and that such a career would be valued at the same level as jobs within the fields of technology, engineering or the health sector for that matter.

The value of artistic expression touches so many of societies deepest challenges. Even while speaking of art and education, our underlying understanding of them probably vary. Some of us are prone to see the importance of preserving old traditional knowledge and craftsmanship, while others see the future in new digital technologies to develop or improve products, services or professions.”

So what are our challenges?

- 1) the very difficult economical situations many artists are faced with today not in the least due to the global and local pandemic
- 2) the challenge of providing equal opportunities taken the priority the arts are given not in the least by educational decisionmakers
- 3) the problem of a common understanding of what we are discussing when we use the terms art or art-education or both...



Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

Cecilie: “To put it bluntly, you might say it is about value-conservative attitudes (museums and conservation) versus forward looking design concepts. Of course we mean both. We just have to make sure that all of us understand and embrace both in our argumentation for the importance of art in society.”

In the light of what was said: should we then really talk about “empowerment” of the arts and artists? Perhaps the term “recognition” is more appropriate.

The response was immediate and particularly in pointing out that we do not want more endless discussions on the value of art in society. We have said it over and over. The question about *Who are we and what we want to be* became very poignant. A group of ‘Influencers’, meaningmakers or just a social `rotary club`. It was pointed out that many are no longer in active positions in art and education.

A number of important issues were raised concerning human rights and the criticism to euro centrism. The point here is that we need to seek alliances with other disciplines and how they work, like human rights and their activism. It would imply to see artists as citizens (with rights and duties).

This thought is obviously linked to contemporary artistic expressions such as participative art and art involvement in public life, memory and museums.

What links the urgency felt in the artistic community is the broadly shared fear of ‘the end’ or deep transformation of an era. The current sense of urgency, the awareness that we are at a turning point where what was before will not be possible anymore (and not only because of the virus), is an opportunity to use for us.

What could our goal be as critical friends? Innovation and new values? Imagine and communicate a new paradigm? Imagining the future?

The means at hand – what do we bring to the table - seem more obvious:

- combination of expertise and care
- trust
- collaborative ethos
- imagination
- different of forms of expression (artistic languages)

Conclusion

We do not want to convince others of ‘our’, the arts, value any longer, of who we are and what we are capable of doing. We are who we are. In this sense the Critical Friends apply principals of Open Space: Whoever is there are the right people. And we do what we do as artists, art managers, and opinion leaders.

But how do we translate that without begging for attention, staying true to ourselves and still look beyond our horizon? With other disciplines (human rights where mentioned) and learning from other disciplines (activism was mentioned)? Can we lead ourselves out of the ‘precariat’ (by ‘caring’ for ourselves) and maintain a sense of urgency?



Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

Are the Critical Friends then maybe more like a Club of Rome (rather than a Rotary Club or 'influencers' as was suggested) and do we 'come out' to the world with a statement or a manifesto? If yes: not do so to ourselves (not preaching to the converted), and not to the institutionalised policy discourse. Rather this could be our opportunity to use artistic language as opposed to the bureaucratic (neoliberal) language administrators and managers are forced to use? Is that an opportunity to add something complementary to what is there already?

Instead of inviting a Keynote speaker for September to a one-off gig, - so to speak without commitment – we propose to think of inviting a provocative voice to engage with us on a longer (mid long) term: an artist for instance (visual, performative, community based,- all possible) that triggers us, but also listens to the conversation that follows and takes that 'food for thought' into a residency to make it productive, and turn it into something to share with wider society.



Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

Short bios participants pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

On alphabetical order of first names

Alex Meszmer, *1968 and **Reto Mueller** *1974 are an artist couple living and working in Pfyn, TG, Switzerland. Since 2006 they are working on public art projects in their local community, creating a digital archive about the history and the stories of the village, building a museum and they declared their village cultural capital of Switzerland for 2011-12. Since 2014 they are searching for the beauty of democracy with their club desirer and they have been working on a community art project together with archeologists in Asyut, Egypt. Their work builds from a combination of digital and analogue archival and everyday materials with participative aspects and they are exhibiting in art spaces worldwide. Alex Meszmer had been a member of the National Committee of Visarte Switzerland (2007-19) and a member of the board of Culture Action Europe (2012-19), head of Swiss Art magazine (2007-19) and head of Fine Arts and lecturer at the Art & Design School St.Gallen. Since January 2020 he is secretary general of Suisseculture, the umbrella of the swiss cultural and media workers associations.

Since the end of 2019, and together with Agnès Quackels, **Barbara Van Lindt** is general and artistic coördinator of Kaaitheater, a Brussels performing arts venue.

Barbara Van Lindt (°1966, Belgium) holds a master degree in Philosophy and a post graduate certificate in Theatre Studies. Her professional experience manifests two recurrent interests: performing arts in a globalized world and the support of young artists' development. At the Gasthuis Theater (Amsterdam, 1997-2001) and wpZimmer (Antwerp, 2002-2006), she created and directed workplaces for emerging artists in the fields of theatre, performance and dance. At Kunstenfestivaldesarts (Brussels, 2006 - 2009) she collaborated as curator. From 2009 till 2018 she explored the field of higher art education as head of department of DAS Theatre (formerly known as DasArts). There she developed a feedback method and culture which have become an international reference for higher education and other peer environments. She occasionally contributes to discussions in the field by publishing or speaking.

Since 2008 **Ben Hurkmans** (1949) is working as a dramaturg and advisor in the cultural sector. He studied languages and theatre and was a teacher at the Theatre Academy of Arnhem and the University of Amsterdam, a theatre critic of the daily Het Parool, and dramaturg/artistic director of several companies, amongst which the repertory company of Amsterdam.

For ten years (1988-1998) he was leading the Theatreschool of Amsterdam and the International Theatreschool Festival that he initiated.

Between 1998 and 2006 he was the director of the Dutch Fund for Performing Arts. After that he was the cultural attaché in London and senior visiting fellow for cultural diplomacy at Instituut Clingendael.

Carla Delfos was trained and worked as an actress. She founded the European League of Institutes of the Arts - ELIA in 1990 and gave leadership to ELIA as its Executive Director for 27 year and developed ELIA into the influential network as it is today. She was knighted 'Chevallier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres' and awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts and Music, a Degree of Doctor of Arts by Columbia College Chicago, the



Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

Andreaspennig by the City of Amsterdam, an Honorary Doctorate by the Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen.

Currently she is leading Foundation Art Futures, has initiated the Disorderly Women Alliance and has various international advising functions, such as member of the Hochschulrat of the University of the Arts in Berlin; member of the Advisory Council of the University of Groningen and Advisor Dutch Performing Arts Fund.

Cecilie Broch Knudsen

Having been involved in art and education all of my working career, I am dedicated to the belief in the importance of art and culture for society.

In my early career I taught and later became the head of a small Norwegian art school. I was trained as a painter, and in pedagogy and art history. In 2007 I was elected rector at Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Norway lasting until 2015, an institution that included performing arts as well as creative arts. I was at the time engaged in the representative board of ELIA. From my position as chair of the Norwegian Artistic Research Program, I have worked widely in promoting research within the arts on a local and European level, holding international offices as committee and board member. At present, I am engaged in working with public and private art institutions through my board positions.

Chrissie Tiller is a writer, thinker, practitioner and educator, with an extensive history of working through collaborative and social art practice, particularly in international and cross-cultural contexts, currently undertaking a PhD by publication at Technological University Dublin, exploring her lived experience as a working class woman in the arts and cultural sector. Having set up and run the MA in Participatory and Community Arts at Goldsmiths, London University, for many years, she is now co-director of the Northern Faculty Of Social Art Practice, alongside her role as critical friend, advisor and embedded evaluator to a number of arts and cultural organisations. More recent think pieces and provocations include Power Up for Creative People and Places, Sharing Power: from Participation to Collaboration for the British Council and Care as a Radical Act for Heart of Glass.

Christine Pybus lectures in Fine Art at MTU Crawford College of Art and Design in Ireland, she has taught on undergraduate programmes, supervised Masters by Research students, acted as a PhD examiner, and over her career has been a visiting lecturer at art academies in USA and across Europe. As a practicing artist she has participated and won many fellowships, residencies, and awards. An elected member of the representative board of the European League of Institutes of Arts between 2010-18, she remains a member of its working group in Arts & Education. A Steering Committee member and Secretary of Paradox the Fine Art European Forum between 2009 2017 she managed its international conference Cork in 2011 and convened strands in Paradox's conferences in Granada, Poznan, and London. Pybus co-edited a special edition of the Journal of Art, Design and Communication in Higher Education 'Challenging Fine Art Pedagogies', published by Intellect in 2014 and since 2017 she reviews publications for the publishers Palgrave Macmillan. Pybus works as an expert external peer reviewer for large scale research fund granting organizations and has acted as an external validator for national academies of art undergoing institutional review/accreditation.

Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

Constant Meijers (Leiden, 1945) started his journalistic career with the legendary Dutch underground magazine “Aloha”. In 1972 he was invited to join the rock magazine “Muziekrant Oor” as editor-in-chief. In 1982, Meijers switched to radio and television and made several program series on new media developments and documentary films on cultural subjects, such as “Rock & Russia”, a two-part TV-documentary on the history of rock culture in the USSR. Between 1997 and 2015 he was leading “TheaterMaker”, the Dutch magazine for the performing arts. He is a very dedicated follower of the Dutch theatre in all its aspects and a very frequent visitor of the many dance and theatre performances in the country and abroad. After his retirement from “TheaterMaker” Meijers was appointed to participate in the Dutch Arts Council’s work on subsidizing, reforming and monitoring the Dutch theatre sector.

Diana Blok was born in 1952 in Montevideo. She studied Sociology in Mexico City before moving to Amsterdam where in 1974 where she devotes herself to the visual arts with photography as her main tool. In 1998 she follows a post-graduate course at the Maurits Binger Film Institute which leads to exploring the synergy between photography and film. Her work explores the subjects of identity, gender, sexual diversity and culture with a confronting, poetic visual language. Her published works include: *Invisible Forces* (1980), *Blood Ties and Other Bonds* (1990), *Adventures in Cross Casting* (1997), *Ay Dios* with writer (2001), *Possible Paradise* (2004), *See Through Us* (LGBTQI life in Turkey (2009), *Time Tells* and *I challenge you to love me* (2015), LGBTQI life in Brazil today.

In the past 4 years her work evolved into a unique interactive-video installation ‘*Gender Monologues*’ so far successfully exhibited in Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, Paramaribo and Amsterdam. May 2021 in Museu del Carmen in Valencia.

Along side her photographic career she is regularly giving lectures and workshops, and is guest professor in the Masters Program of Universidad Politecnica de Valencia.

Efva Lilja is an artist, activist and professor of choreography. She works with choreography in the form of dance, imagery, film and writing. Her choreographed events challenge and offer new visions for the creation of a reality where political activities and everyday action can be questioned and reformulated. Her award-winning works have been presented in forty countries, often seen as controversial and trailblazing. Efva Lilja is also a popular lecturer and has published 11 books. She has an active role in the development of artistic education and artistic research, as a member of various international bodies and for a period as an expert adviser to the Swedish government. She served as Vice-Chancellor of DOCH, the University of Dance and Circus in Stockholm 2006-2013 and as Artistic Director of Dansehallerne in Copenhagen 2016-2019.

Emanuele Amodei

Born in Siena on 28 August 1972, he graduated in Economics and Commerce in Florence with the specialization in Cultural Heritage Management. Chief Executive Officer of Palazzo Spinelli Group, President of the Institute for Art and Restoration of Florence, General Manager of the International Art and Restoration Exhibition in Florence, President of Herifairs Network, today he covers an important role in the field of conservation, restoration and enhancement of cultural heritage and in the context of cultural planning.

He is Cultural Ambassador of the city of Florence and of the Calabria Region, Board member and former Executive member of ELIA (European League of Institutes of Arts) in Amsterdam, Vice-

Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

President of Assopatrimonio Italia, National Councilor of Assocastelli, Member of Icomos Italia, expert of learning evaluation and consultant of the Saudi Commission of Tourism and Heritage, member of the Plart Foundation (Museum of Plastic). He has carried out project design and development activities in over 35 countries, including Albania, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Brazil, China, Croatia, Cuba, Egypt, Japan, Libya, Malta, Mexico, Poland, Spain, United States, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay, Vietnam. He is the author of several publications, among which we point out "Artis, A European project for Culture 2000" and "Cultural Heritage and Community Funding (46 projects for Calabria)".

Gottfried Wagner, born 1950, Kitzbühel, Austria, teacher and cultural manager in public and private environments, e.g. director of KulturKontakt Austria and the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) Amsterdam. More recently advisor, e.g. to More Europe, Culture in EU external relations, or cities, e.g. Nürnberg's bid for the European Capital of Culture - title 2025.

Professor **Henry Rogers** is a Glasgow-based artist and Master of Fine Art Programme Leader at The Glasgow School of Art. He is currently Visiting Professor at the Royal Academy Schools, London. ROGERS is an interdisciplinary practitioner working with drawing, painting, photography and writing. He is concerned with formality, mediation and mimesis in art with particular reference to queer theory and queer strategies in art practice thus addressing the impact of performance and performativity on art-based production. He made a significant contribution to learning and teaching with particular emphasis on research strategies in and through artistic practice. He has supervised several AHRC funded doctoral students and has an exemplary record as a PhD supervisor. He is currently interested in the discourse of 'queer abstraction' and ideas of 'fabulation' in the arts. Recent projects include: 'DATA LOAM: Sometimes Hard, Usually Soft: The Future of Knowledge Systems' (2020) published by De Gruyter

Irina Cios

Romanian cultural manager, curator, art writer and lecturer based in Bucharest. Since November 2014 she is director of the Administration of the National Cultural Fund – AFCN, the main public funder of cultural projects in Romania. Since 2007 she is guest lecturer of the Photography and Dynamic Image Department, The National University of Arts Bucharest. She managed for over 15 years the International Center for Contemporary Arts, Bucharest, initiated a gallery space / program focusing on new media and experimental art, organized and curated contemporary art events, AIR, symposia, conferences, workshops etc. Involved in several European cultural networks she acquired an important experience in international collaborations, partnerships and funding management. Member of the International Art Critics Association – AICA (president of the Romanian section 2006 – 2012), she contributes with studies, interviews, essays in art magazines, catalogues, art publications in Romania and internationally.

Directeur en curator Oude Kerk - **Jacqueline Grandjean** (1968) studied film science and art history in Amsterdam, fine arts in New York, and Museum leadership at The Getty Institute in LA. She was director/founder of the Frankendael Foundation and worked as curator for the Amsterdam Museum and as Artistic Director and as artistic director of the bureau for cultural innovation Brains Unlimited for various cultural institutions such as the Stedelijk Museum, Rijksmuseum, Submartine Channel and the World Wide Video Festival.



Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

John Butler

Professor John Butler is an artist and the Chief Executive Officer of EQ-Arts, a leading independent, international quality assurance and enhancement agency for European higher arts education. He is an Emeritus Professor of Art, Birmingham School of Art, Birmingham City University, where he was Head of School from 2003 – 2015. Butler was President of the European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA) from 2000-2004, where he initiated the Thematic Network for the Arts responsible for developing the rollout of the *Bologna Declaration* for the arts for the European Commission and this led to the establishment of EQ-Arts. Butler was responsible for founding two contemporary art galleries Spacex (1978) in Exeter and Eastside Projects (2008) in Birmingham and has curated numerous national and international exhibitions. He was awarded an Doctor Honoris Causa by University of Art & Design, Cluj-Napoca Rumania in 2004 and the University of Plymouth in 2007.

John O'Connor is a Director of the first technological university in Ireland: Technological University Dublin (formerly Dublin Institute of Technology) and also Dean of the College of Arts and Tourism – comprising six schools and three research centres. With over 5,000 students and around 360 academic staff it is one of the largest colleges in University. In this capacity he is chair of the College Leadership Team which has responsibility for the strategic and operational direction of the College; and the College Board which is a subcommittee of University's Academic Council.

Previously, as Head of the University's School of Creative Arts, he planned the migration to a new campus being developed in the heart of the city at Grangegorman. The Conservatoire, School of Media, School of Creative Arts and School of Languages, Law and Social Sciences will come together in a 17,000 sq m purpose built facility including: a 400-seat concert hall, a recital hall, theatre, TV studio, workshops, practice rooms, recording labs and classrooms for upwards of 2,500 students and 150 staff. Well served by public transport and beside Stoneybatter, described by Time Out magazine as one of the '40 coolest neighbourhoods in the world' in 2019, the East Quad is poised to become a creative, performing and media arts centre of national and international importance.

Kieran Corcoran is Head of TU Dublin School of Creative Arts in Ireland 's largest university, Technological University Dublin. He served as President of ELIA the European League of Institutes of the Arts from 2010-2014. He is a founder member and former chairperson of Ireland's leading multidisciplinary arts event The Galway Arts Festival and has extensive experience as a visual arts curator.

Lars Ebert (Heidelberg, 1976) is managing board member and co-director of the cultural centre H401 in Amsterdam where he develops and implements European collaboration projects. He also works as an independent advisor in the area of higher education and the arts. He is a frequent facilitator, moderator and speaker during international events and serves on the boards of various international organisations in education, research and policy development in the arts.

Martin Prchal is vice-principal at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague. Trained as a musician of Czech origin in the US, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and the UK, he holds teaching and performance diplomas (violoncello) and a MA degree in musicology. Following a career as a performing musician and several positions in the area of internationalisation at the conservatoires of Utrecht, The Hague and Groningen, he became the first CEO of the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC) in 2001, a post he held until 2011. During 2014-2020, Martin was chair of the board of *MusiQuE – Music Quality*



Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

Enhancement, an European organisation for the review and accreditation of institutions and study programmes in higher music education. Since 2020, he is vice-president of the European Chamber Music Academy – ECMA. His current post at the Royal Conservatoire includes responsibilities for curriculum development and innovation, research, quality assurance and international relations.

Mary Ann DeVlieg

Currently a PhD candidate critiquing policies and citizenship rights of artists impacted by displacement. An independent facilitator, moderator, speaker; constructs training courses and curates conferences. Co-founder of [IARA](#), International Arts Rights Advisors. Since 2010 she protects and defends human rights of artists-at-risk as case worker and researcher. Evaluates international cultural collaboration projects, policies and programmes for the European Commission's culture, research, and international development programmes, the EESC and private foundations. Founded the EU working group, [Arts-Rights-Justice](#); was freeDimensional's Director of Strategic Development (2013-2015) and is a co-founder of the [Arts-Rights-Justice Academy](#), University of Hildesheim. Former Secretary General of [IETM](#) (1994-2013), international network for contemporary performing arts. She founded/co-founded www.on-the-move.org and [Roberto Cimetta Fund for Mobility in the Mediterranean](#). Holds the EU Individual Prize for services to artists' mobility and France's *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*. GA member, [Ettijahat Independent Culture](#) Lebanon. MA in European Cultural Policy from Warwick University.

Mercedes Giovinazzo

She graduated in Archaeology from the Università degli Studi "La Sapienza" in Rome, Italy, and holds a Master's in Arts Management from the École Supérieure de Commerce - ESC Dijon, France. She is director of [Interarts](#) and president of [BJCEM – Biennale des Jeunes Artistes d'Europe et de la Méditerranée](#). She has been deputy director of Customer Services at the Universal Forum of Cultures – Barcelona and administrator of the Directorate for Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg; board member of the Teatro di Roma; president of [Culture Action Europe](#) and president of the "Access to culture" platform of the European Commission. She has co-led the international [campaign](#) for the inclusion of culture in the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Michaela Butter has 40 years' experience as a museum curator, creative producer, funder and currently manages an inclusive multi-disciplinary arts centre, Attenborough Arts Centre (AAC within University of Leicester <https://attenborougharts.com/>)

She has organised major touring exhibitions, international conferences, festivals and events.

She worked in senior positions at Arts Council England leading on an ambitious Capital Development programme for the East Midlands, as well as developing policy and partnerships to promote the role of arts in rural, international, social and economic strategies.

As Director of AAC, she doubled the venue's size, becoming part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio as a centre of excellence for inclusive practice, championing disabled artists and emerging local talent, backed by award winning education and outreach programmes.

With extensive experience on boards, she was Chair of Déda Dance House, Vice Chair of EFAH (Culture Action Europe and Primary Artist Collective and now supports Access All Areas, promoting Access for Learning Disabled creatives.



Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

Mike van Graan is the Manager of the Sustaining Theatre and Dance (STAND) Foundation in South Africa, an initiative with its roots in COVID-19 lockdown conditions, to provide long-term support to the performing arts ecosystem. He also co-designs - and facilitates - the programme of the Atelier for Festival Managers with its global reach. He was the founding Secretary General of Arterial Network, a pan-African organization advocating for the cultural dimension of development, human rights and democracy.

Creatively, Van Graan works as a playwright. One of his recent works, *Little Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Metaphors*, addresses the Sustainable Development Goals, and is now prescribed by some South African schools.

He is the 2018 recipient of the Swedish Hiroshima Prize for Peace and Culture, the same year that he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Pretoria in recognition of his work as a playwright, and as a cultural activist.

Prof. Dr. **Milena Dragičević Šešić**, University of Arts, Belgrade is professor of Cultural management and Cultural Policy. Head of UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policy and Management (since 2004). President of University of Arts Belgrade (2000-2004), Member of National Council for Science (2006-2010). She is guest lecturer on numerous universities (Columbia New York; Buffalo university, Jagiellonian Krakow, Lyon II, Institut des etudes politiques Grenoble, Hildesheim university, Bilgi university Istanbul, art schools and universities in Riga, Tallinn, Vilnius, Utrecht, Moscow, Singapore...) Participating in EU Framework V, & COST research (city cultural policies; cultural memory; cultural sustainability). She has published 15 books and more than 150 studies, translated in 17 languages.

Nikolaus Wyss, *1949, cultural anthropologist, former rector of Lucerne school of Fine Arts and Design, Switzerland. As ELIA board member organizing two Biennials (Lucerne 2004 and Gotenborg, Sweden, 2008). Since 4 years living in Bogotá, Colombia, running a bed&breakfast, writing blogs and shooting barefoot videos.

Ancien élève de l'Ecole normale supérieure, **Patrick Talbot** a été enseignant avant de devenir conseiller culturel à New York et à Rome, et d'occuper les postes de directeur de plusieurs écoles d'art (Bourges, Nancy et Arles) et directeur adjoint à Paris. Aujourd'hui, à la retraite de la fonction publique Patrick Talbot poursuit un sujet qui l'a toujours intéressé, il se consacre à la traduction d'un livre américain qui a pour sujet la première invasion européenne en Amérique. Aujourd'hui il est engagé auprès des jeunes artistes en tant que critique d'art. En liaison avec cette activité et dans la situation d'urgence de nouvelles initiatives sont à développer.

Les artistes aujourd'hui, depuis l'arrivée du covid 19, dans tous les pays de monde, sont en large majorité dans une situation dramatique. Très peu d'initiative de sauvetage ont été mises en place. On ne peut donc que saluer la manière dont les espagnols ont réussi à persuader leurs politiques de leur permettre d'agir et de continuer à fonctionner. Au vue de cette situation, dans le cadre de ce nouveau contexte, Je me propose de participer à un groupe de réflexion et d'action sur ce sujet afin de permettre, en particulier pour les jeunes artistes, de trouver au plus vite des solutions de créations et de financement.

Patrizia Violi is Full Professor of Semiotics at the University of Bologna. She is director of *VS. Quaderni di studi semiotici*, and member of the Advisory Board of the Fossoli Foundation. Former



Report pre-launch Critical Friends 14 January 2021

Director of the *International Centre for Advanced Studies in the Humanities 'Umberto Eco'* and of *TraMe - Centro di Studi Semiotici sulle Memorie Culturali*. Among other publications, Patrizia Violi is the author of: *Meaning and Experience* (Indiana University Press, 2001), *Landscapes of Memory. Trauma, Space, History*, Peter Lang, 2017). She was PI of two Marie Curie EU exchange projects on memory and trauma in Europe and Latin America.

Paula Crabtree is Vice Chancellor at Stockholm University of the Arts (SKH), Sweden. Previously she was Rector at Bergen Academy of Art and Design (KHiB), Norway and before that Dean of Fine Art also at KHiB. She was Vice President of European League of Institutes of Arts (ELIA), was actively involved in European projects including developing the Tuning Document for Fine Arts that led to establishing Paradox Fine Art European Forum.

Paula was also co-artistic director for NEU/NOW Festivals. Artistic Research development has been at her forefront through board membership of the Austrian PEEK Programme for Arts-based Research, the Evaluation Panel for the Swiss Universities Programme for Collaborative Doctorates and the Strategic Development Council of PSL Paris Research University, as well at KHiB and at SKH. Paula is a founding board member of EQ-Arts, an international arts-focussed quality assurance agency. Paula currently lives between Sweden and France.

Stefan Gies looks back on a wide range of professional experience as a performing musician, music teacher, humanities scholar and researcher. He was a long standing professor and principal at a German music HEI. Being actively involved in the work of the *Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC)* since 2007, he took the position as its Chief Executive heading AEC's office in Brussels in October 2015. Stefan is board member of *Culture Action Europe* and the German accreditation agency *evalag*.

Ulf Dalnäs has a background as Senior Lecture at the School of Music in Gothenburg and worked in several positions within the Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts. Past five years as the Head of HDK the Academy of Design and Crafts and previous active for eight years in the ELIA board and active for six years in the Swedish Bologna expert group. As for now he has a position as the Vice Dean for Cooperation at the faculty within the University of Gothenburg.